

20th April 2020

Dear Constituents,

Thank you for contacting me about trophy hunting.

I truly believe that as sentient beings who can experience fear and pain, all animals should be treated with thought and care. Trophy hunting involves pursuing another animal in conditions which causes stress, fear and pain, with hunters killing as a form of entertainment, not for food, nor to control pests or to protect other species.

I understand there are arguments for conservation hunting. Some individuals and organisations make the case for conservation hunting as a way of bringing income into countries with rich wildlife populations, but poor economies. They also argue that commercial hunting provides a strong incentive to manage and safeguard wildlife populations and protect other valuable natural resources from exploitation. I also recognise that occasionally there is a need to cull some species to keep nature in balance and the control of predators to protect other species.

However, I cannot see how those justifications can be used to defend hunters who kill an animal which has been bred in captivity for the specific purpose of being hunted for entertainment. I believe action is needed to stop this sort of exploitation, and to establish how defensible the arguments for conservation hunting are. I am therefore pleased that the Government decided to consult on options to restrict the imports and exports of hunting trophies to the UK - including a potential ban.

This consultation, alongside a call for evidence, will allow Ministers to understand the public's views on all sides of the debate and gather expert evidence to inform any next steps. The consultation closed in February and the responses are now being considered.

With regards to Early Day Motions, I make a general rule of not signing these. They have no legislative effect, are almost never debated in Parliament, and cost the British taxpayer over £600,000 annually in printing and publication costs alone. I do not feel that this represents a good use of public money, especially given the size of the current budget deficit.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Alok Sharma MP